Revista

May/June 2012

Midsummer Ball

21st June 2012

Lo Mirador

See Menu on Page 19

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Dear Members,

The Costa Brava is now waking up for the summer, ready to welcome the visitors. At this moment Don and I are enjoying a few days in Miami prior to a very exciting cruise from Fort Lauderdale, visiting Caribbean islands, Colombia, then through the Panama Canal and up the west side of America, visiting Los Angeles, San Francisco etc and arriving 3 weeks later in Vancouver, where we will stay with friends for a week.

As soon as I get back we will be busy with preparations for the Queens Jubilee Celebrations in Malcolm and Alice's Garden on June 9th and our summer Ball at the Mirador in Torrella on June 21st. If you don't attend either of these functions you will be missing 2 exceptional events. I do hope to see you all there.

We were asked recently by the friends of the Red Cross in Torrella if we could possibly help them to buy 2 new dolls which they use to give talks and lessons on resuscitation. We have agreed to do this. This organisation does a lot to help ex-pats in this area.

I do hope that we shall see you at our meetings this summer,

Until next time,

Best wishes, Mary.

Editorial

John Sienczak

In this issue we have majored on events raising money for Cancer Research. The annual cancer walk from L'Estartit to L'Escala was a great success (see pages 21-23 and 25). This was a followed by a Karaoke night at the Walrus where a high old time was had by one and all. I have also included an article from Mary Hepworth (see pages 12,13) who has been organising ladies lunches selling clothes and other items for cancer research in Girona.

One of the aims of the Catalonia Society is to promote good relations with the local Catalan community. The walk organised by The Walrus Bar in L'Escala included a contingent of Catalans who enjoyed themselves and asked for the following comments to be published:

> "*The organisation was unbeatable from start to finish, the lift over to L'Estartit, the buffet breakfast at Harveys, the stations along the way (we really appreciated the oranges!!) and the welcome when we got back to the Walrus. We were totally impressed and will try and drum up more participants for next year."*

We have organised a donation to the Torroella Red Cross Assembly for the replacement resuscitation 'Dummies'. A thank you letter is printed on page 11 and an article about the Red Cross organisation is on page 10.

This now brings our total donations for this year to 4100 Euros. Also, we are planning to buy some furniture for the L'Escala firemen rest-rooms and we are still talking to the L'Escala CAP about providing some equipment in a similar manner to the Palafrugell CAP/Hospital.

We have a new contributor this month, Roger Arndell, who has provided some close up photographs of insects from his garden in L'Escala. As well as the article in the magazine, there are more pictures and links on The Revista web site:

http://www.bsce.ch/revista.

Roger has planned some more contributions for future issues

My thanks to Richard Bosdet who sent me the “Puns for Educated Minds” (on page 17). I had to use Google to work out what one meant! However, most of them are of the “Groan, Groan” variety. We also have “Humour for Smart People” on pages 25-26 sent to me by Sue and Tony Gibbs.

The Yes language school is offering intensive Spanish conversation courses—see advert on page 7. If we can get a group of 8 people together then the price is 4 Euros per person per hour. I am happy to be the focal point for a group to study a couple of hours per week. Contact me at the email address below.

I had intended to write an article on the pros/cons of using a Kindle. However nobody responded to my request for “Kindle Experiences (good or bad)” so I have abandoned the idea for now.

I have a introduced a Garden Notes article on page 18. The intention is to generate some feedback from other keen gardeners so that we can share experiences of gardening in Catalonia.

Do please contact me regarding anything concerning the magazine at:- revista@bsce.ch.

John Sienczak

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LONG LIVE SANT JORDI

Sant Jordi (Saint George), patron of Catalunya and England.

On the 23rd April 1616 two authors of worldwide renown died in Stratford-Upon-Avon and Madrid: William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Shakespeare and Cervantes, together with Saint George are the reasons why Catalunya wakes up full of colour, smiles, roses and books on the 23rd April.

Sant Jordi means happiness and brightness, tradition and culture; Sant Jordi is the day in which we enjoy a stroll on the streets full of people, cuddles and smiles, new authors, books, signatures, prizes… culture!

A culture which shouldn't die, a tradition we must honour, a spirit we need to uphold, especially in these times, when the economic and political climate is so unstable. We read and suffer continuous cuts in national budgets. Our country is going through a very difficult time where the economy is about to suffer a break down. The politicians are making some decisions which will not only affect our present lives, but also our future and that of new generations'. We have to accept and understand some of these cuts, but we cannot agree with some others. The budget on health and education, the mainstays of a country, has been reduced by 10%.

They may not be conscious of how important culture is, how much these cuts will affect us, our culture and the future of our nation. This celebration, this day should be used as a claim to make politicians realize the big mistake they are making.

Sant Jordi has always been a day full of hope, excitement and brightness, the same hope and excitement we should see in our future, the brightness we expect from our politicians. If only all days were a new Sant Jordi day. **Long live Sant Jordi:**

to keep our culture,

to see smiles and cuddles in the street,

to remember that culture and education are important,

to remember not only our lovers, but also our friends,

to hope something pleasant will be happening in our lives.

"Nos sobran los motivos" (we have plenty of reasons) as the great poet and singer Joaquin Sabina sings in one of his songs.

Núria Heras Isach

http://www.yes-escala.com

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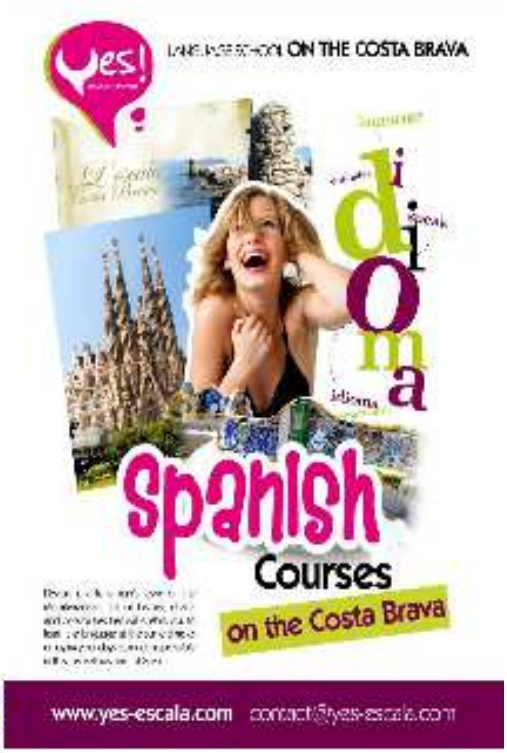

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Easter Bonnet Lunch at Restaurant Sotavent
Roger Hanson

Easter time is once again upon us and as usual we had our annual Easter Bonnet lunch.

We returned to last year's venue, the Restaurant Sotavent, and once again Manolo did not disappoint.

The food was outstanding and was washed down with an ample amount of fine wine and concluded with coffee, everybody leaving the table satisfied.

The bonnet contest was this year entered by three men and four ladies, exhibiting a varied, artistic and imaginative streak. The important task of judging was give to Don who closely viewed the contestants and announced the winners as Carolyn Starr for the ladies and John Sturgeon for the men. Both received Easter Baskets as their prize.

The event as usual was concluded with the raffle organised by Andrea and Barbara. There was a fine variety if prizes on view and many people went home happy winners.

Many thanks to Andrea who once again organised the event and to Manolo and his staff for their excellent food and service

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RED CROSS SUPPORT GROUP

Sue Creed

Some years ago, Elda Mata of the Torroella Red Cross, together with several U3A members, set up a Support Group for English-speaking Seniors. They continue to do a wonderful job of helping those in need who live in the Torroella/L'Estartit area. Similar support groups are in the process of being set up in the Palafrugell and Palamós areas, both of which have a high density of foreign residents.

This is not only for U3A members but for any person experiencing difficulties with health, mobility, language, welfare rights, etc. We all hope to be self-sufficient for as long as possible but, eventually, there may come a time when we need a helping hand. In order for this project to be a success, we would need to be aware of potential cases so that these can be followed up and a visiting plan set up. If you know of anyone in need of help, please contact the Coordinator below. Please be assured that all information is treated with complete confidentiality.

Already many members have contacted us for help or information through the Red Cross Support Group on the U3A Website. This also lists various items which are available for loan through the local Red Cross, e.g. wheelchairs.

There can be no support programme without volunteers so, if you are interested in giving a little of your time to this scheme, please contact one of the Coordinators below:

Torroella / L'Estartit / Verges / L'Escala area: Roger Creed, 972 66 80 14 creeds17256@gmail.com

Palafrugell / Pals / La Bisbal area: Christine Green 972 62 03 76 christineverde@gmail.com

Palamós/Calonge/Sant Antoni area: Christine Green

Contact can also be made through the Red Cross Group on the U3A website http://www.u3acostabrava.org/

To the Committee, British Catalonia Society

16th April 2012

I would just like to extend my grateful thanks to the committee of the British Catalonia Society for their serious consideration of my email asking about the possibility of a donation being granted to the Toroella Assemblea Local de Creu Roja' towards payment of badly needed replacements for their 'Dummies' used in first aid group demonstrations. Pat Sturgeon very kindly rang to give me the good news that you have generously voted to pay for this invaluable equipment.

Today I have spoken to Elda Mata Miro-Sans, who started and has presided over the expat associated Red Cross Group in Torroella. She was absolutely overwhelmed by the news and the generosity of your association. She is at present away on holiday with her family but I am sure on her return she will be in touch with you.

The U3A Red Cross Associated group have previously organised half day first aid courses using the present Red Cross 'dummies' for demonstration. Christina Clark, who organised last years course, explained to the Red Cross that unfortunately the present 'dummies' were past their usefulness as they were really too old and the plastic too hard for useful demonstrations. The Assembly realised that 'Tina' had, in her professional career been in charge of training and testing life guards so they invited her to advise them on the best replacements for their needs.

I have spoken to 'Tina' Clark and told her the 'good news' from the B.C.S. She says that, in the future, should you so wish she would be willing to organise a similar course for your organisation as she has done for the U3A.

Thank you once again for your generosity and support of such an important local organisation.

Best wishes

Roger Creed - Secretary -Torroella Red Cross expatriate volunteer group

Report on Costa Brava Ladies Coffee Morning, Sale and Raffle followed by Lunch at Robert's Restaurant L'Estartit in aid of Fundacio Oncolliga de Girona Wednesday March 21st2012

The first day of Spring and after 4 months of no rain, God decided the Spring rains would commence. So I had a few words with my husband and mother 'up there'!! "Please no rain between 10.30 a m and 1.00 p m!!"

I set off in torrential rain at 8.00 a m from Pals and lowering black clouds, dreading no one would come out in this weather, but as I turned towards L'Estartit it became a light drizzle.

You wonderful ladies, one by one arrived, set up your tables and rails inside and out, under cover. The cakes and helpers appeared. I can't thank you enough for your support.

Believe it or not by 10.30 a m the rain eased and we even had a glimmer of sunshine and it stayed dry until after 1.30 p m.

Thank you Roger & Mum!!

Four of the Fundacio ladies set up their stall with lots of attractive handmade items. Jen with her delicious cakes and pies, Reka with her jewellery and ladies with a great choice of lovely clothes and accessories at bargain prices. It's nice to have something different in the wardrobe that has not cost a fortune.

People started arriving and stayed for a long time enjoying the atmosphere; it took me 2 hours to get around the tables!!

Julie and Melita sold the raffle tickets and Lizzy R. called the raffle on which we made €122.50

We presented Corrinda with a thank you plant for all her help over the last 25years. Liz H. kindly bought Corrinda's plant and collected the lunch money, 31 people attended the lunch. We all had a very good lunch thanks to Corrinda and Pedro. Elaine stepped in to do the accounts and accept donations (as sadly Jean's husband was ill so she could not be with us).

10% of all sales and donations amounted to €143.50. So in total we made €266.00 for the Fundacio. A big thank you to all the ladies selling items and giving 10% of your profits and everyone for turning out on a damp day.

Thank you also to Jen, Ursula, Natalie and Elaine for the super cakes and the ladies who donated items and money etc.

Sadly Sara W. who helped me deliver boxes of clothes, rails etc suffered an injury at home so could not make it on the day. Maria, Regine, Barbara, Ann and Elaine helped me clear and pack up. Despite the weather it was a great success and enjoyed by all.

Thank you everyone for supporting our cause.

I am sorry to say this is my last coffee morning sale, but if a group of ladies would like to take over, I am willing to assist.

We now have a total of €850.00 in the fund and will present the cheque to the Fundacio Ladies at our last lunch at the Hotel Trias, Palamos on Wednesday April 18th.

The lunch is 1.30 p m for 2.00 p m and will cost €13.00, to include 3 courses, bread, wine and water. **Names only** required by Friday April 13th please if you wish to attend- phone Mary 972667856 or e mail Elaine- johnelainekilvington@hotmail.com

The proceeds of this our last raffle will go to homeless children in Catalonia, as we have supported children through Action Aid for over 20 years!!

Hope to see some of you in Palamos.

You all deserve a medal. Thank you.

Best Wishes

Mary Hepworth

Editorial Note: Whilst this is not a British Catalonia Society event I felt it was worth publishing as it was such a worthwhile cause and fitted in well with the Cancer Walk organised by The Walrus Bar.

ENGLISH CHURCH

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Madremanya

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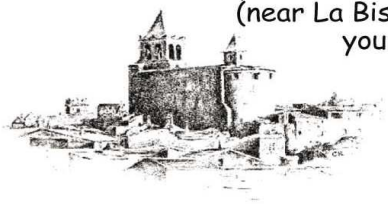
We meet for public worship in English at 12.00 noon on the LAST Sunday of every month at the parish church of Sant Esteve, Madremanya (near La Bisbal) and you would be very welcome, whatever your church affiliation. And to join us afterwards for a bring and share lunch.



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Puns for Educated Minds—Get ready to GROAN!
Courtesy of Richard Bosdet
The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian. *(Editor used Google to work this one out!)*

She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.

A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway.
One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'

I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.

A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: 'Keep off the Grass.'

The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

A backward poet writes inverse.

In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.

When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.

If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.

Garden Notes

I am not a professional gardener but I do enjoy pottering around in the garden. In these short articles I intend sharing some of my experiences of gardening in Spain. I would particularly welcome a dialogue with members about their experiences so that we all can learn.

A particular passion of mine is the use of bulbs. With my birthday in March I love seeing all the Spring bulbs providing their splashes of colour so early in the year. Last year I planted about 250 daffodils, tulips, anemones, crocuses. It never ceases to amaze me how we push these dried up objects into the soil and without fail months later green shoots appear followed by a glorious display of flowers. A particular favourite of mine are dwarf daffodils and tulips. The only downside to bulbs is that you need to leave them to die back after flowering. In my view there are 3 options:

1. What I normally do is Leave them to die back naturally. They are a bit untidy but I feel this is a small price to pay for all the pleasure they have given me. I do trim back the dead flowers. I leave them for about 6 week after flowering
2. Gently dig them up and re-plant them in a spare bit of ground. Leave them to die back then dig them up and store them in a cool dark dry place. I have never tried this as I never seem to have a spare bit of ground! I would be interested to hear from anybody who has done this.
3. Treat them as annuals and just dig them up when they have finished flowering. I feel this is such a waste as bulbs are designed to die back, multiply and grow back the following year

As well as the traditional spring bulbs there are a variety of summer bulbs that will grow very successfully in Spain. This year I have planted about 200+ Begonias, Gladioli, Cannas, Acidanthra, Iris, Gypsophilia and Lilies. As well as growing in the soil many of these make excellent pot plants.

One of the issues I have is that the spring bulbs are taking up room dying back whilst I need to get the summer bulbs planted. I have experimented this year by starting the summer bulbs off in 3” pots to give them a head start before I plant them out towards the middle of May. I will let you know how I get on.

I am about to create a new rockery in my garden. This will be the subject of my next article together with some photographs.

John Sienczak

British Society of Catalunya
MIDSUMMER BALL
Thursday 21st June 2012
Lo Mirador, Toroella de Montgri
19.00 for 20.00

Menú

Carpaccio of Beef

-

Pappardell Carbonara

-

Carrot Soup with Marscapone

Grilled Loin of Veal

-

Out of Bone shoulder Of Lamb

-

Cod au Gratin with Garlic & Mariere sauce.

Cheese Platter

-

Mosaic of fruit Sorbet

-

Chocolate flan with orange sauce.

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MUST BE BY 7TH JUNE

Walrus Walk fund-raising finale – A "Charityoke"
by Geoff Martin photos by Mel

Karaoke is an emotive word-people either love or hate them. Walrus bar owner **Tony Waters** - an avowed aficionado of karaokes - decided that a fitting end to his annual cancer charity walk should be a grand "charityoke" to take place later that same evening, (March 31st) - after the walkers had recovered their breath. After a quiet start, a collection of serious singers began to stack up some memorable performances! **Norma Trueman** set a high standard by blowing the roof off the bar with a pile-driving power ballad. *If they are looking to fill the vacant shoes of Whitney Houston-they need look no further!* Following a duet with her grand-daughter **Taniel** (on a rare visit from South Africa); Norma's youngest son **Haydon Trueman** enthralled us all with an uncannily accurate interpretation of "Romeo and Juliet" by Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits.

Barbara Hanson kept up the pace with two virtuoso soulful solo offerings.

The Blues Brothers (*aka* ***Jayson Muxlow*** *and* ***Neal Johnson***) made a surprise appearance, giving the spellbound audience renditions of "Shake Your Tail Feather" and "Rawhide" complete with choreographed routines! *Have you two been rehearsing this act for weeks?*

Rawhide? Yeeeehah! Whatever next?.....

……The Western theme continued - **Norman Wray** whipped up a musical frenzy with his take on Doris Day singing "The Deadwood Stage" from the musical "Calamity Jane!" Wife **Yvonne** (ably abetted by **June Joyce** and **Karen Johnson)** made up the horses on his stagecoach as **Norman** wielded his whip!! Could *thongs* get any better!? An amazing and amusing performance by all.

I would have telephoned Simon Cowell to come and watch–if I'd had his number to hand!

Husky-voiced **Helen Elsden,** bubbly **Barbara Hanson,** kinetic **Karen Johnson** and dynamic **Diane Parker** formed a veritable *"tour-de-foursome"* who treated us to a pulsating hour of Supremes / Three Degrees / Shirelles / Crystals and Ronettes songs. Ladies - we all agreed that Phil Spector should be eating his heart out!

At half past one in the morning, **Tony** decided to reprise his personal karaoke favourite as a curtain closer. To the lingering strains of "Everybody Hurts" by REM and appreciative chants of "Tony Tony Tony!" echoing from his adoring fans, we reluctantly left to wend our weary way home.

Tony will be adding 10% of his profit from the evening to the Walk proceeds-a big thank you to those who came and especially to all those who rose (singing) to the occasion!

Editors Note: The following pages have photographs from the walk. There are more pictures in he Revista website

http://www.bsce.ch/revista

Humour for Smart People

Sue and Tony Gibbs

The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again invited readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.
Here are the winners:

1.Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.
2. Ignoranus: A person who's both stupid and an asshole.
3. Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
4. Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.
5. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
6. Foreploy: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
7. Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high
8. Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
9. Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
10. Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
11. Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
12. Decafalon (n.): The gruelling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
how much weight one has gained.
13. Glibido: All talk and no action.
14. Dopeler Effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
15. Arachnoleptic Fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
16. Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
17. Caterpallor (n.): The colour you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

The Washington Post has also published the winning submissions to its yearly contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common words.

And the winners are:

1. ***Coffee,*** n. The person upon whom one coughs.
2. ***Flabbergasted***, adj. Appalled by discovering
3. ***Abdicate***, v. To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. ***Esplanade***, v. To attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. ***Willy-nilly***, adj. Impotent.
6. ***Negligent***, adj. Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.
7. ***Lymph,*** v. To walk with a lisp.
8. ***Gargoyle***, n. Olive-flavoured mouthwash.
9. ***Flatulence***, n. Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.
10. ***Balderdash***, n. A rapidly receding hairline.
11. ***Testicle***, n. A humorous question on an exam.
12. ***Rectitude***, n. The formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. ***Pokemon***, n. A Rastafarian proctologist.
14. ***Oyster***, n. A person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
15. ***Frisbeetarianism***, n. The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
16. ***Circumvent***, n. An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

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Through the Lens

So you have bought your shiny new camera. You carefully take it out of its box and find besides the camera an assortment of leads, maybe a user manual (although more and more these are on CD or you need to download them), a CD and various other bits and pieces.

The camera has all sorts of knobs, buttons and switches. Be brave, it is not as complicated as it may seem at first glance.

I want in this article to look at one of the controls that may be present. Generally it is a dial with settings such as Auto, P, A, S and M on and it is these I want to discuss.

PASM stand for Programmable, Aperture, Speed and Manual. Canon use slightly different letters, (Tv instead of S standing for 'time value' and Av instead of A standing for aperture value) but the effects are the same.

Auto will set the shutter speed and aperture to values that its built-in exposure meter think are suitable and indeed most cameras do a reasonably good job of setting the values correctly. So for quick pictures Auto will quite probably be fine.

So if Auto is doing a good job why use any other setting? If the subject of your intended picture is moving, for instance there is a bird in your garden, and you want to freeze any movement then it's time to use the S setting. This controls how long the shutter remains open and letting light fall onto the sensor in the camera or onto the film in the camera. The camera will adjust the aperture to a suitable value to try to get a well exposed photograph.

What is the aperture setting? This controls how wide the shutter opens. It is graduated in 'f' numbers. The value 'f2.8' for instance will allow much more light in than 'f22'. The smaller the number the more light you let onto the sensor or film. Why bother if Auto and the S setting do such a good job. The aperture will also affect the 'depth of field'. That simply is how much of your picture is focused. Imagine taking a photograph of somebody standing against a complicated background. A sharply focussed background will be distracting from the main subject.

The selection of the aperture will allow you to have the subject in focus but the background out of focus and so the subject will stand out far more. A low ‘f’ (e.g.f2.8) number will give a small depth of field while a higher ‘f’ number (e.g. f16)a greater depth of field. For landscape photography you will probably want far more in focus so a value of perhaps ‘f16’ may be suitable.

P for programmable is a mode which will allow you to alter both speed and aperture together and so choose the combination you want.

The last setting, M, is a manual mode and although the built-in exposure meter is still working you can over-ride it and adjust the setting to values of your choice. For instance have you ever

tried to photograph the moon? In auto mode the camera will try to set the speed and aperture to values that will give you a white blob instead of the moon. Adjusting the values will enable you to obtain a much better picture and if there are foreground objects you want to include then set the aperture accordingly and a faster speed to cut down the harsh white blob.

Other settings on the dial may include scene settings and the exposure meter will do its best to set optimum values for each type of scene.

One last point, if you want to use a slow shutter speed then a tripod or somewhere to rest the camera becomes necessary to avoid camera shake.

Next time I would like to talk about focus and look at the various focussing modes.

David Brown

The Revista Recipe

Hello Members.

It is that time again when I give you a few suggestions to liven your diet!!
As I am a lover of artichokes I thought that I would do a feature on these tasty vegetables. They are usually in plentiful supply at different times of the year. They are cheap to buy too so what do you do with them? You are about to find out!!

WHOLE ARTICHOKES

SERVED WITH EITHER VINAIGRETTE OR HOLLANDAISE

Serves 6

This is a very simple way to serve artichokes especially if you have the time to pick off the leaves one by one and dip them into the sauce.

You will need:

6 artichokes – one per person
Pinch of salt

This is what you do:

Place the artichokes into a pressure cooker with a pinch of salt. Cover them with just enough water and cook for about 10 - 15 minutes on a vegetable setting.

NB. If you do not possess a pressure cooker, then cook in a saucepan for double the time.

You will know when they are cooked because the stalk at the base will easily fall off.

Drain and reserve until ready to serve.

These can be a simple starter to your meal by placing one artichoke in a gratin dish and serve the dipping sauce separately.

Now for another more complicated recipe but I can assure you it is really worth the effort.

BRAISED ARTICHOKES

Serves 6

You will need:

12 artichokes – trimmed by cutting around the base and upwards 3 large until almost all the leaves have been discarded – then dipped into a bowl of cold water with the juice of a lemon. The lemon juice will help discoloration.

3 large scallions – trimmed and quartered

3 cloves of garlic – crushed and chopped

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Few sprigs of thyme

3-4 bay leaves

Pinch of salt

Peppercorns to suit

½ bottle of white wine

Preserved chopped lemon peel to suit.

This is what you do:

After initially preparing the artichokes as above, sweeten them, by sautéing with the prepared onions and garlic in the olive oil on a medium heat for about 2 minutes. Add the thyme, bay and seasoning and cook gently for about 5 minutes – do not allow to colour.

Add the wine and 150ml/5 fl.oz water and bring to the boil.

Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer, check the seasoning, cover with a lid and cook for about 20 – 30 minutes. Test the cooking of the artichokes by inserting the tip of a small knife – there should no resistance. .Add the preserved lemon peel at this stage if using.

Serve in warm dishes with the liquor surrounding them.

NB Before cooking the prepared artichokes they must be lifted out of the watered lemon juice liquid. and drained.

The preserved lemon peel can be made in advance by sprinkling salt over the peel and left to marinate for at least a week but this flavouring is optional

Jacqy Harding

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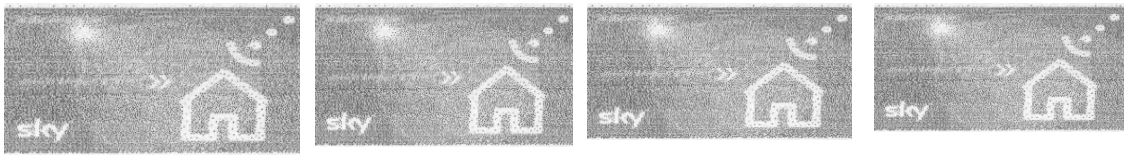

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Spain's 2012 Budget And A Tax Amnesty

By Bill Blevins,
Financial Correspondent
Blevins Franks

Spain's tough 2012 austerity budget provides for savings totaling around €27.3bn. This includes the €15bn in tax rises and expenditure cuts announced last December. Taxpayers will be relieved that it did not include any new tax rises, but how long will this last?

After being submitted to parliament the budget will be formally adopted in June.

Tax amnesty

The budget included the announcement that Spain will launch a "fiscal amnesty". With the state of the economy, the deficit and desperate need for the government to increase revenue, an amnesty does present a pragmatic solution in a country where around 20% is thought to be underground.

The amnesty will enable individuals to regularise undeclared accounts, whether in Spain or offshore. They will only need to pay 10% on regularised money and 8% on dividends. No questions will be asked or criminal penalties imposed.

The government believes that €25bn of previously undisclosed assets could now be declared, thus earning the government €2.5bn.

Besides the initial earnings for the government from the 10% tax, once the funds have been regularised they will then be in the system and so could continue to be taxed at the normal rates in future years, thus generating ongoing revenue for the government where once it did not receive any from these funds.

Cost of living

Contrary to expectations, the government did not increase VAT as it wanted to spare consumers.

However, electricity and gas bills will rise by 7% and 5% respectively to reduce energy subsidies, so your cost of living will rise anyway.

Reducing the deficit – will the budget work?

As agreed with the EU, the government has to reduce the deficit from 8.5% to 5.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) this year and to 3% next year. Budget minister Cristobal Montoro said he was confident that the new package would enable Spain to meet the target..

However observers warn that Spain will struggle to meet this both this year's and next year's target and will have to dig just as deep next year. The economy is expected to shrink by 2.7% this year and the recession makes the austerity task that much more difficult.

The cuts outlined in the budget fall short of the €34bn experts calculate is needed to reduce the deficit to 5.3%.
Unfortunately this could mean further cuts are needed before long, very possibly including more tax rises, especially as some economists think the government's tax revenue projections for 2012 are too optimistic. If the measures outlined in the 2012 budget are not successful at reducing the deficit, tax hikes could be avoidable.

As El Pais commented in an editorial after the budget:

"*It's most likely that during this year, the government will have to raise taxes again ... the recessive phase of the economy will make this difficult. There are strategies to emerge from recession. All of them risky and require a strong message of tax hikes.*"

As always, seek advice form a firm like Blevins Franks on the legitimate tax planning opportunities available to you in Spain.
Summarised tax information is based upon our understanding of current laws and practices which may change. Individuals must take personalised advice.

To keep in touch with the latest developments in the offshore world, check out the latest news on our website
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PARAPROSDOKIANS: (Winston Churchill loved them)

Here is the definition:
"Figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected; frequently used in a humorous situation."
"Where there's a will, I want to be in it," is a type of Paraprosdokian.

Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on my list.

“Of course I agree with you… Now we’ll both be wrong.”

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.

We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right - only who is left.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

Evening news is where they begin with 'Good Evening,' and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.

Some cause happiness wherever they go. Others whenever they go.

You don’t seem to be yourself lately. So tell me, what brought about such an improvement?

The following web sites have more examples:

http://www.englishforums.com/content/humour/paraprosdokians.htm

http://www.aish.com/j/fs/Jewish_Paraprosdokians.html

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Up Close and Personal in a L;Escala Garden

Roger Arndell

The praying mantis is named for its prominent front legs which are bent and held at an angle that suggests the position of prayer. They are kept worldwide as a pet.
I believe that the green mantis is Spohodromantis viridis, but I may be wrong. Despite its scientific name this insect ranges in colour from bright green to dull brown.

The mantis with the feather like antenna was photographed in the Summer in my garden. I have been unable to identify it and would be grateful if any member can enlighten me or put me on to an insect expert as I have a number of garden insects not yet identified.

HUMMINGBIRD HAWKMOTH.

This Hawkmoth is a familiar “Day-Flying” moth often seen visiting garden flowers using the long proboscis to extract nectar. It is a very common moth often seen throught the year.

Editors Note: There are some more pictures available on The Revista web site http://www.bsce.ch/revista.

EGYPTIAN GRASSHOPPER.

This grasshopper can be found throught the year in our gardens. Body length is 30-80.It is superficially locust like. Adults are uniformly grey-brown and a pronotum** that is distinctly ridged like plates of armour. It has a bulbous head with striped eyes.

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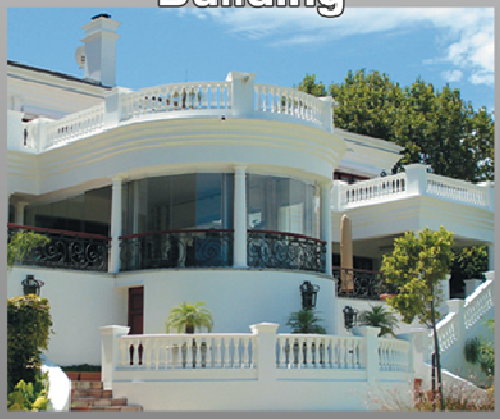

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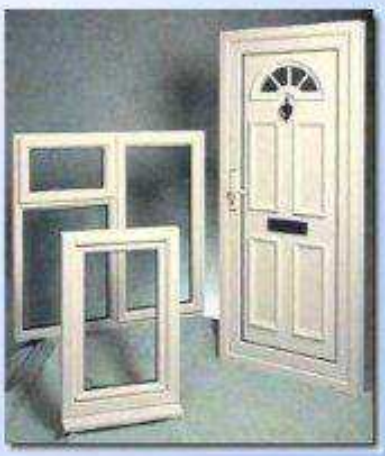

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